Possibility of Nuclear Reactor Deal With France

3267. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are exploring a possible nuclear reactor deal with France as was done by us with Russia recently as reported in the Indian Express dated 30.6.1998;

(b) whether any Indian Delegation recently visited Paris, if so, the nature/ details of the talk held; and

(c) whether Indian Delegation was able to narrow down the gap in the seemingly desperate positions of the two sides by making our position clear that "India was against any international controls" or "full scope safeguards for its entire nuclear program"?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (c) Discussions have been held with France on the possibility of co-operation in nuclear energy. Both sides have explored the ambit of such co-operation based on the respective nuclear policies of the two countries and international commitments in this regard.

An Indian delegation recently visited Paris to discuss nuclear export control issues. The positions of the two countries with respect to the possibilities of co-operation in nuclear energy were reiterated.

Growth Rate of Computer Software

3268. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA' Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact growth rate of all segments of Electronics, except computer software, has been below target;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to take steps to boost the munufacture and exports of electronics items; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI R. JANARTHANAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The reasons for shortfall in growth rate in certain segments of the Electronics industry include overall industrial recession in the international market, financial crisis in the ASEAN region which has led to easy availability of imported goods at much cheaper prices and lack of fresh investments for setting up production base due to the fall in local demand.

(c) and (d) Details of steps taken to boost the manufacture and exports of electronics items are given in the statement (*See* below)

Statement

(i) Policy initiatives like exemption from locational limitations, abolition of licensing, abolition of phased manufacturing programme and amendment to the MRTP Act to facilitate investments.

(ii) Liberalisation of Export-Import Policy by allowing free access to imported capital goods, components, raw materials and other inputs etc.

(iii) Rationalisation of fiscal policy especially in the areas of duty structure, corporate taxation etc. and special concessions in customs and excise duty for Information Technology sector to encourage local manufacturing.

(iv) The Electronics Hardware Technology Park Scheme (EHTP) designed to meet the specific requirements of a globally oriented electronics sector. This provides a flexible policy invironment that

would greatly enhance the ease of doing business and making professional access to the vast Indian domestic market as an incentive for export production in the country.

(v) Encouraging foreign collaboration for investment and technology. This includes automatic approval for foreign equity upto 51%/74% in high priority industries and automatic permission for foreign technology agreements in such industries with certain ceiling on payments. Import designs and drawing have been allowed duty free.

(vi) Encouragements to NRIs and Overseas Corporate Bodies predominently owned by NRIs to invest in India. This includes automatice approval upto 100% equity in priority industries.

(vii) Implementation of a quality infrastructure programme called the Standardization, Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) Programme to promote the quality of Indian electronic goods, ISO certification programme for quality improvement.

(viii) Participation in and sponsoring of seminars, exhibitions, business delegations etc. abroad and in India.

(ix) An Export Promotion Board has been set up by the Government to examine and resolve issues that requires inter-ministerial co-ordination. A number of decisions have been taken by the EPB to boost electronic exports, such as notification of fast track clearance of imported goods and relaxation of rules for hiring of foreign nationals and export of replacement goods.

(x) A number of measures have been announced in the revised Exim Policy 1997—2002, which shall go a long way to boost electronics exports. These include improvement of:—

(a) Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme for the electronics and software sectors,

(b) Quality based Advance Licence Scheme,

(c) Special Import Licence (SIL) entitlement for electronics sector for exports under Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) and

(d) Depreciation Limit for EOU/EPZ units in Electronic Sector.

(xi) Government hve appointed a National Task Force on Information Technology and Software Development to formulate the Draft of a National Information Policy.

(xii) The Development Council for Electronics Industry have been constituted.

Electronic Governance in Andhra Pradesh

3269. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government of Andhra Pradesh has proposed the establishment of an Institute of Electronic Government in Hyderabad;

(b) if so, the details of this proposal;

(c) whether Government are keen to encourage modernisation of administration;

(d) if so, what steps will be taken to establish an Institute of Electronic Government in Hyderabad; and

(e) what is the seed capital required to ground this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (BANKING,